



Judicial Council of Georgia
Administrative Office of the Courts

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release:
October 17, 2011

Fulton County Task Force Looks for Efficiencies in the Judicial System

(Atlanta) Starting in November, Fulton County government leaders and stakeholders will begin to study how to improve business processes in the Superior and State Court systems. The Fulton County Court Improvement Task Force is spearheaded by the Superior Court, State and Magistrate Courts, Fulton County Board of Commissioners, Georgia General Assembly, Atlanta Bar, and community leaders. The primary goal of the Task Force is to anticipate demands on the judicial system through 2025 and recommend how best to prepare for those needs from an organizational, jurisdictional, and operational standpoint.

“Fulton’s taxpayers deserve a Judiciary that recognizes its unique role in this State and the value of the taxpayers’ dollars. The world has vastly changed since 1976, when our current system was designed,” said Chief Judge Cynthia D. Wright, Superior Court of the Atlanta Judicial Circuit and Fifth Circuit Administrative Judge. “It will be vastly different in 2025. The time is now to design a system that protects the public and protects the public purse.”

The Task Force will address how best to ensure that civil litigants receive prompt and fair hearings; criminal cases are processed accurately and efficiently; pro se litigants have the proper resources to achieve justice; and all participants in the Fulton County court system receive improved customer service. The Task Force will furnish their findings and recommendations about the business system improvements to county and state officials; these recommendations will include potential budget efficiencies for Fulton County taxpayers. “Our criminal justice system must be brought into the 21st century. Working together, we must reduce costs by holistically looking at criminal justice, which includes streamlining business processes and integrating technology to improve the speed,

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efficiency, and communications of the overall system,” shared Mr. John Eaves, Chairman of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners.

Emanating from recommendations by the Fulton County Criminal Justice Blue Ribbon Commission, the Task Force will increase public safety and conserve public resources by identifying innovations in the courts’ structure, operation, and jurisdiction. The Task Force’s work is especially relevant as resources dwindle and demands on the justice system grow. The Task Force will issue a report of recommendations for the Fulton County judicial system in September 2012.

Members of the Fulton County Court Improvement Task Force are appointed by the Fifth District Administrative Judge, in consultation with the Chief Judge of the State Court and other elected officials. Members include:

- Mr. William Barwick, Esq., Former President of the State Bar, Partner at Duane Morris LLP, and Chair of the Task Force;
- Ms. Cicely Barber, State Court Administrator;
- Mr. John H. Eaves, Chairman of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners;
- Rev. Darrell Elligan;
- Ms. Joan Garner, District 6, Fulton County Board of Commissioners;
- Ms. Liz Hausmann, District 3, Fulton County Board of Commissioners;
- Ms. Harriett Isenberg, Esq.;
- Mr. Thomas M. LaDow, Founder ICM Strategies, Business Consultant;
- Mr. George Lawson, Esq.;
- Ms. Yolanda Lewis, Superior Court Administrator and Fifth District Court Administrator;
- Chief Judge Patsy Porter, State Court of Fulton County;
- Mr. A.J. Robinson, Central Atlanta Progress;
- Ms. Cathelene “Tina” Robinson, Clerk of Fulton Superior Court;
- Ms. Rita Sheffey, ex officio, President of the Atlanta Bar Association;
- Sen. Horacena Tate, Senate Special Judiciary Committee;
- Rep. Wendell Willard, Chairman House Judiciary Committee; and
- Chief Judge Cynthia D. Wright, Superior Court of the Atlanta Circuit and Fifth District Administrative Judge.

All members will serve without compensation. The Administrative Office of the Courts has been called upon to provide research and technical support to the Task Force. The Administrative Office of the Courts serves as the staff to the Judicial Council of Georgia, which is charged with developing policies for administering and improving the courts.
